

these innocent men, women, and children, perhaps the events of World War II, the Holocaust, might never have taken place.

As George Santayana reminds us, those who forget the past are condemned to repeat it. Perhaps this, above all, is the valuable lesson each of us must learn from the Armenian genocide.

As a result of the failure of some nations to acknowledge this horrible tragedy, the Turkish crimes have remained unpunished. An international court yet to condemn the holocaust of an entire nation, and this impunity has permitted the Turks to repeat similar crimes against the Greek inhabitants of Asia Minor, the Syrian Orthodox people, and, recently, people living in Cyprus.

However, despite the unmerciful efforts of the Turks, Armenian civilization lives on today. It lives on in the independent Republic of Armenia. And it lives on in communities throughout America, particularly from my home State of California.

Today, we honor the innocent Armenians who tragically lost their lives. Today, we acknowledge that the Ottoman Turks committed genocide against the Armenian people. Today, we demand that this undeniable fact be accounted for by the current leaders in Istanbul.

I look forward to the day when the world says in one united voice we remember the Armenian genocide. Until that day comes, I will continue to stand up here before the House of Representatives and remind all of us of our responsibility to learn from the past and our responsibility to prevent any such atrocities in the future.

COMMEMORATION OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KNOLLENBERG. Mr. Speaker, I join my colleagues in commemorating the Armenian genocide. I hope other Members of the House will join us in commemorating this 83rd anniversary.

The Oxford Dictionary defines the word "genocide" as, and I quote, "the deliberate extermination of a people or a nation." When most people hear this word, they immediately think of Adolf Hitler and his persecution of the Jews during World War II.

Most individuals that you meet on the street are unaware that the first genocide of the 20th Century occurred during World War I, and was perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenian people. The tactics utilized by the Ottoman Empire were every bit as brutal and deliberate as those used by Hitler.

Concerned that the Armenian people would move to establish their own government, the Ottoman Empire embarked on a reign of terror that re-

sulted in the massacre of over a million and a half Armenians.

This atrocious crime began on April 15, 1915, when the Ottoman Empire arrested, exiled, and eventually killed hundreds of Armenians; the religious, the political, and the intellectual leaders.

Once they had eliminated the Armenian people's leadership, they turned their attention to the Armenians that were serving in the Ottoman army. These soldiers were disarmed. They were placed in labor camps where they were either starved or were executed.

The Armenian people, lacking any political leadership, then were deprived of all of the young able-bodied men who could fight against the onslaught, were then deported from every region of Turkish Armenia.

The images of atrocities endured by these men and women are as graphic and as haunting as the ones that are etched in our minds from the Holocaust. Why, then, are so many people unaware of the Armenian genocide? I believe the answer can be found in the international communities; response to this disturbing event. Simply put, the unspeakable crimes against the Armenian people were essentially ignored.

At the end of World War I, those responsible for ordering and implementing the Armenian genocide were never brought to justice, and the world casually forgot about the pain and suffering inflicted upon the Armenian people. This proved to be a grave mistake.

In 1939, in a speech before his invasion of Poland, Hitler justified his brutal tactics with the infamous statement, "Who today remembers the Armenians." And 6 years after his speech, 6 million Jews have been exterminated by the Nazis. As has been repeated on the floor this evening already, never has the phrase, "those who forget the past will be destined to repeat it," been more true and more applicable.

If the international community had spoken out against this merciless slaughtering of the Armenian people instead of ignoring it, the horrors of the Holocaust might never have taken place.

As we commemorate the 83rd anniversary of the Armenian genocide, I believe it is time to give this event its rightful place in history. That is why we gather tonight to honor the memories of the victims of the genocide that occurred 83 years ago.

So let us pay homage to those who fell victim to their Ottoman oppressors and tell the story of the forgotten genocide, the forgotten genocide. For the sake of the Armenian heritage, it is a story that must be heard, and it must be remembered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. SCARBOROUGH) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. SCARBOROUGH addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

ARMENIAN GENOCIDE COMMEMORATION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. MENENDEZ) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, as we have heard from some of our colleagues, we come again this year to the House floor to commemorate and pay tribute to the 1.5 million victims of the Armenian genocide. Some ask why 83 years later we continue this exercise. The answer in my mind is rather simple. By telling the history and evoking the names of the victims, we protect them and others who would willfully erase from history their lives and the tragic events which occurred between 1915 and 1923.

As with the Nazi Holocaust, the Irish Famine, and other atrocities, we have a responsibility to society to recount of the history of the Armenian genocide so that we do not forget its victims and so that we remember man's capacity to destroy others who differ in their opinions, their race, religion, or ethnicity.

Genocide is the most egregious of crimes. It is not a crime of passion or revenge, but of hate.

Since 1923, Turkey has denied the Armenian genocide, and there has been no justice, and no Nuremberg trials for the victims and the families of the Armenian genocide.

To those who continue to resist the truth, I can only believe that they had chosen to ignore the hard evidence or to indulge, to their shame, by ignoring the facts. Like the Holocaust, denying the Armenian genocide cannot erase the tragedy, the lives that were lost, or compensate for driving people from their homeland.

For the people of Armenia, the fight continues, particularly for those residing in Karabagh. I am hopeful that we will see the day when peace, stability, and prosperity are realized for the people of Karabagh, and for all Armenians.

For my part, I am hopeful that, through our continued efforts in the Congress, we can improve the lives of the Armenian people, continue to speak out for the human rights observers that, in fact, we hope for that part of the world, and continue to speak out against the atrocities that are continued to be committed by the Turkish Government. Certainly, we will continue to remember those who lost their lives and continue to commemorate this somber occasion.

Ralph Waldo Emerson tells us:

The history of persecution is a history of endeavors to cheat nature, to make water run uphill, to twist a rope of sand. The martyr cannot be dishonored. Every lash inflicted is a tongue of fame; every prison a more illustrious abode; every burned book or house enlightens the world; every suppressed or expunged word reverberates through the earth from side to side. Hours of sanity and consideration are always arriving to communities as to individuals when truth is seen and martyrs are justified.